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and many a curious relique of elegant workmanship has been found, which bespeaks an early knowledge of the finer arts. Of the latter description the following singular instance has lately occurred in this neighbourhood.

A Peasant, while walking beside a rivulet, near Ballycastle, on the 20th of June last, observed a glittering hook of yellow metal, projecting from a part of the bank where the earth had been recently washed away by the current; on stooping to pull it out, he found it to be the extremity of a rod, thirty-eight inches long, free from rust, and of a bright straw colour; each end was terminated by a narrow hook, inflected in contrary directions; these hooks were massive, about two inches in circumference, and about two inches below the neck of each, the rod was divided into three distinct *virgæ*, which were closely twisted together, in the manner of a toasting fork; the hooks are not included in the length of the rod, which, if extended in a straight line, would measure forty-two inches. Unacquainted with its value, the peasant suffered it to be used as a bauble by his children, until his attention was raised by a person offering more for it than it was apparently worth; he then, with some difficulty, wrenched off one of the hooks, and sent it to a gentleman in Ballycastle, who, on trying it with aquafortis, found it to be entirely of pure gold, and to weigh (in air) twenty ounces and a-half, *avoir-du-poise*. The workmanship, though neat, is simple, it is void of all those embellishments so commonly used in gold and silver ornaments of the middle centuries; it bears no religious symbol and its original purpose remains for the skilful antiquarian to decide.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

HUMANITY TO THE INSANE RECOMMENDED.

PASSING through a neighbouring village some evenings ago, my curiosity was attracted by the tumultuous noise raised by a number of boys; on approaching the place, I perceived that they were diverting themselves at the expense of a miserable maniac,

whom they encircled. One dragged him by the rags of a tattered garment that some humane person had stitched round him: another, placed in the most ludicrous situation, a greasy and rimless hat, through the crown of which appeared the locks of his distracted head; and others tempted him with such questions as they knew would irritate him most. What incoherent nonsense, rude ribaldry and horrid blasphemies did they not provoke him to utter! And the more savage his expressions, the more did they excite the merriment of his unfeeling auditors. To the honour of human nature, the countenances of some of the younger branches of this doughty rabble were "strongly marked" with compassion; and I am persuaded that had they been left to themselves, the little hands that teased the offenceless sufferer, would have been extended towards him in acts of kindness; but their seniors, more sensible of the shame they incurred, and more inventive in cruelty, made them the instruments of the abuses they were too thoughtless to contrive. Some of their parents were present, and though they made a few trite and cursory observations on the levity of youth, they encouraged them to proceed with a half-hidden smile of acquiescence; for, as neither wounds nor bruises were inflicted, they probably stilled the whispers of conscience with the idea that their children were committing only a venial sin.

Would young people allow themselves a slight use of that reason, for the want of which they insult others so much, a moment's consideration might make them compassionate.... Pleasure smiles on their youthful spring, and inexperience suggests that their prosperity will be permanent; but vexation, disappointment, and despair may await them in the paths through which they are to pass. The maid on whose smile their happiness depends, may deceive their hopes through the fickleness of coquetry, or be sold to another through the avarice of her guardians. The wealth for which they may hereafter bravely fight, may be withheld by an unprincipled agent, or be wrested from them by the rapacious plunderer. Their cha-

acters may be calumniated, their honour laid in the dust, their souls may be saddened into melancholy, by the terror-breathing denunciations of the fanatic. Such misfortunes may be the sad source of insanity, deplorable as that which they now deride; and by misfortunes such as these, the insanity they deride was probably occasioned.

But in persons more advanced in life, it is peculiarly out of character to be careless of the wild wanderer, and every act of unkindness he receives from them, must meet our decided abhorrence. Perhaps, while they bolt their door on him, a forlorn pair, whose parental feelings are at least as strong as theirs are disconsolately wondering, whether he shelters on straw and sack-cloth, or traverses the lonely mountain. Perhaps an affectionate wife ponders in solitude on the comeliness of the person they inhumanly disfigure with stripes; while her children tell their play-mates, how their father became crazed, stole from home, and has hitherto eluded the most diligent search. As old age approaches, the understanding will become weak, and the memory irretentive; and can they who permit their children to insult the insanity of a stranger, expect that they will show much respect to the dotage of a parent?

An ancient writer has observed, that, "*oppression* makes a wise man mad;" and had he said that *abuse* has the same tendency, the observation would have been equally true. Had the author of the divine aphorism just now quoted, been insulted and wronged in the manner that the insane are, in almost every village, I question if all his wisdom could have withheld him from the phrenzy of desperation. It is strange that people who are anxious to have them clothed and sheltered, should think so little of amusing themselves by provoking them to anger; never imagining that such provocations frequently repeated, render almost impossible that recovery they so devoutly wish. It is likely they do so, either through a desire of triumphing in the superiority of their own understandings, or from a supposition that the objects with whom they sport are ignorant of the treatment they re-

ceive; but that it makes a deep impression on their minds is apparent from the circumstantial account which in their lucid intervals they can give of it. Indeed, a law that by the severity of its penalties, would restrain the populace from irritating the insane by insult, would be as salutary as that which prevents them from injuring the persons and properties of their wiser fellow-creatures.

For my own part, I have always looked upon such people as the most pitiable of all earthly objects; though it be difficult enough to attend, with gravity, to their wild witticisms, and ridiculous reveries; I have always checked myself whenever I happened to smile or laugh, in the soul-saddening presence of such uncommon misery. Alas! what are the unreal personages with whom they suppose themselves surrounded, and the mock-majesty with which they invest themselves, but the wild phantoms of imagination, hovering round the benighted ruins of intellect, once bright and glorious? The mendicant who cannot now tell me his name, had perhaps transcribed the quintessence of volumes on the tablet of his memory; and he who cannot now write a legible word might have been once a man of erudition, who at college bore the prize from every competitor. When I hear boobies raise the hue-and-cry after an unfortunate fugitive, I glow with indignation, conscious that they would have given Swift, Lee and Collius, similar abuse; and when I see a son of sympathy comforting and consoling him, I please myself with the idea that it was in this manner Sterne treated the poor distracted Maria.

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To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SPRING WHEAT.

Triticum Aestivum.

THE following account of Spring Wheat, communicated to the Board of Agriculture in London, by Sir Joseph Banks, is recommended to the attention of farmers. It is, however, by no means designed that the exertions of the cultivator should in the least degree be relaxed in raising wheat by autumnal sowings; a practice that